



Uniland holds ribbon cutting for 150,000 s/f distribution/manufacturing facility at former Bethlehem Steel site

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Shown are: Erie County Industrial Development Agency president & CEO John Cappellino; City of Lackawanna mayor Annette Iafallo; Total Quality Assurance International COO Joe Wolkiewicz; Erie County executive Mark Poloncarz; Max Advanced Brakes president & CEO Mathew Loh; Empire State Development Western New York regional director Karen Utz; and Uniland Development Co. CEO Michael Montante.

Lackawanna, NY Local community leaders gathered at 8 Dona St. for a ceremonial ribbon cutting for Uniland's new distribution and advanced manufacturing facility. Built on "spec", Uniland has fully leased the 150,000 s/f building and has begun construction on a second spec building, adjacent to 8 Dona, at 2 Steelworkers Way.

"Western New York has an inspiring industrial heritage and a bright future," said Uniland CEO Michael Montante. "It is a true honor to add 8 Dona to Uniland's existing industrial portfolio which includes over two million s/f developed across 230 acres. We are proud to be the first developer at Renaissance Commerce Park and are excited to add a second facility at 2 Steelworkers Way to meet the regions industrial need for manufacturing and warehousing operations."

Erie County executive Mark Poloncarz highlighted Uniland's leasing success at 8 Dona, and the

many milestones achieved at Renaissance Commerce Park which adds much needed industrial capacity in Erie County. The County Executive made the redevelopment of the former Bethlehem Steel site a priority from the onset of his administration, and led the efforts to assemble funds for acquisition and remediation of what now totals 240 acres along Rte. 5.

“The work of Erie County and our partners in transforming the former Bethlehem Steel site into Renaissance Commerce Park is paying dividends,” said Poloncarz. “Today, we officially welcome Total Quality Assurance International to Renaissance Commerce Park at 8 Dona St. As we celebrate today, Uniland is already starting preliminary work on 2 Steelworkers Way right next door. It is amazing to see this formerly blighted, abandoned industrial wasteland turn into a productive, modern commerce park where local and international companies want to grow and thrive. Thank you to TQAI and Uniland, as well as the ECIDA and ILDC, city of Lackawanna, and Empire State Development for partnering with Erie County to deliver another great ‘win’ for our community.”

Last fall, Uniland announced its first tenant at the 8 Dona warehouse, Total Quality Assurance International (TQAI), would occupy 108,000 s/f. Headquartered in Flushing, Michigan, TQAI specializes in engineering, logistics, warehousing, quality control, quality inspection services, packaging and rework for the automotive industry. TQAI established its Buffalo operations in 2011.

“We look forward to continuing to strengthen our operations and expand our third-party automotive services in Lackawanna,” said Joe Wolkiewicz who is the chief operating officer for Total Quality Assurance. “Uniland has been attentive to detail, responsive to our needs, and a strong partner for TQAI since we expanded to the Buffalo region in 2011. We are excited for our next chapter of growth at Renaissance Commerce Park.”

Uniland’s significant investment in Renaissance Commerce Park represents another step forward in the City of Lackawanna to rebuild the business base and create new employment opportunities.

“The city of Lackawanna offers congratulations to Uniland Development Company on the successful completion and grand opening of its new 8 Dona St. facility and a warm welcome to TQAI as the newest member of Lackawanna’s growing business community,” said mayor Annette Iafallo. “We’re grateful for Uniland’s tremendous vote of confidence in Lackawanna – reflected in the multi-million dollar investments they’re making at Renaissance Commerce Park – and look forward to continuing our working partnership during construction of their next facility at 2 Steelworkers Way.”

Recently, a second tenant, Max Advanced Brakes headquartered in Toronto, Canada, signed a lease for the remaining 42,000 s/f at 8 Dona St. “We are thrilled to be part of the Buffalo community with our first US distribution center which will allow us to serve thousands and thousands of American drivers right here from Lackawanna,” said Mathew Loh, president and CEO of Max Advanced Brakes. “We look forward to being part of this wonderful community and to enhancing the lives of the people and communities we serve.” Established in 2010, Max Advanced Brakes is a retailer and distributor of automotive brake parts with a mission to make stopping power simple for consumers.

Commercial spec space is at a premium in Western New York, which can inhibit business growth and encourage new job creators to bypass the region in favor of other states. Manufacturers and warehouse distribution facilities are critical to the nation's supply chain, and by offering already-constructed sites, Erie County can remain economically competitive.

Empire State Development president, CEO & commissioner Hope Knight said, "For decades, the former Bethlehem Steel site stood as one of the region's biggest challenges. Today, the story is different though – governor Hochul and New York State have worked to remediate and redevelop this blighted land – and we once again can see the site's potential. The ribbon cutting for 8 Dona St. continues efforts to transform this modern industrial park and attract new and growing companies.

The Erie County Industrial Development Agency [ECIDA], through its land-development arm, the Industrial Development Land Corporation [ILDC], has served as redevelopment manager of the former Bethlehem Steel site now known as Renaissance Commerce Park. ILDC president and CEO John Cappellino says the success of the development efforts to date are the direct result of fruitful collaboration among the many stakeholders.

"Each milestone we celebrate at Renaissance Commerce Park represents the dedicated efforts of a large coalition working to bring new life to this site. This ribbon cutting is particularly special because Uniland is the first developer to join the effort. Just as TMP Technologies did when they became the first manufacturer to build here, Uniland has joined the coalition and made it stronger. I congratulate Uniland for this wonderful achievement, and we look forward to a continued partnership at RCP," said ECIDA/ILDC president John Cappellino.

Industrial Development Agencies – or IDAs – play a critical role to ensure that large development projects like 8 Dona St. become a reality in Erie County. They are an important part of the economic feasibility equation, allowing Erie County and the WNY region to be competitive in bringing new and expanding businesses to Erie County. Upon completion, these new projects unlock a wave of local economic activity through material sales, job creation, and additional revenue for the municipalities and school districts. Additional energy grants from National Grid and National Fuel were received to propel the 8 Dona project forward as well.

After breaking ground in October 2021, Uniland began construction at 8 Dona St. on the single-story industrial building which features 36-foot clear height and generous column spacing. The location serves as a hub for manufacturing, warehousing, logistics and trucking operations. Last year, Uniland announced a second spec building, adjacent to 8 Dona along Rte. 5, located at 2 Steelworkers Way which is now under construction. Both industrial facilities provide options for customized interior buildouts for first-generation tenants. Uniland is the first developer to work in partnership with the city of Lackawanna, Erie County, and New York State on Renaissance Commerce Park's emerging status as a premier light industrial commerce park.